

Message Text

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PAGE 01 DACCA 05648 101025Z

17

ACTION IO-10

INFO OCT-01 NEA-06 ISO-00 AF-04 ARA-06 EA-06 EUR-12 RSC-01

CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-01 INR-05 L-02 NSAE-00 NSC-05

PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 AGR-05 AID-05 EB-07

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FM AMEMBASSY DACCA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5143

AMEMBASSY ROME

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ROME FOR FODAG

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: EAID, EAGR, UN, FAO, BG

SUBJ: VISITS BY FAO/WFP DIRECTORS TO BANGLADESH

REF: ROME 16716

1. FAO DIRGEN DR. A. H. BOERMA, ACCOMPANIED BY DR. D. L. UMALI, ASSISTANT DIRGEN, REGIONAL REP FOR ASIA AND FAR EAST, VISITED BANGLADESH FROM DECEMBER 4-7 AT THE INVITATION OF THE BANGLADESH GOVERNMENT. BOERMA MET WITH THE PRIMIN, THE FOMIN, DEPUTY CHAIRMAN PLANNING COMMISSION, THE MINISTERS FOR AGRICULTURE; FOOD; FLOOD CONTROL, WATER RESOURCES AND POWER; AND THE STATE MINISTER FOR FORESTS, FISHERIES AND LIVESTOCK. IN ADDITION TO THESE TALKS IN DACCA, DR. BOERMA VISITED RANGPUR, THE MOST FOOD SHORT DISTRICT IN NORTHERN BANGLADESH. HE HELD A PRESS CONFERENCE AT THE END OF HIS VISIT.

2. PRIMARY PURPOSE OF VISIT WAS PERMIT DR. BOERMA SEE FIRSTHAND THE PROBLEMS FACED BY FOOD SHORT BANGLADESH. BOERMA IS ALSO VISITING INDIA, PAKISTAN AND SRI LANKA, AS WELL AS, WE UNDERSTAND, LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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TANZANIA, FOUR OF THE MOST SEVERELY AFFECTED FOOD IMPORTING

NATIONS. VISIT FOLLOWS WORLD FOOD CONFERENCE AND FIRST MEETING OF FOOD IMPORTERS AND EXPORTERS (ROME 16716) AND PRECEDES A FURTHER MEETING OF FOOD DONORS AND RECIPIENTS SCHEDULED, WE UNDERSTAND, FOR JANUARY. ACCORDING UNDP RES REP, DACCA, MAJOR THEME SOUNDED BY DR. BOERMA DURING VISIT WAS IMPORTANCE OF SELF-HELP MEASURES ON PROCUREMENT AND PRODUCTION SIDE BY BANGLADESH GOVERNMENT. DR. BOERMA MADE POINT THAT SUCCESS OF "MATCHING" EFFORT BY BDG WOULD BE KEY FACTOR IN ENCOURAGING DONOR RESPONSE.

3. AT HIS DECEMBER 7 PRESS CONFERENCE DR. BOERMA REPORTEDLY MADE FOLLOWING POINTS:

A. FAO WOULD INTENSIFY ITS EFFORTS TO MOBILIZE WORLD PUBLIC OPINION TO HELP BANGLADESH ON PRIORITY BASIS IN PROCURING FOODGRAINS TO MEET ITS FOOD DEFICIT AND IN ORGANIZING PROGRAMS TO ASSIST BDG ATTAIN FOOD SELF-SUFFICIENCY.

B. THE IMMEDIATE ESTIMATED NEED OF BANGLADESH WAS FOR 1.8 MILLION TONS OF FOODGRAINS INCLUDING A BUFFER STOCK (OF 500,000 TONS OR 3 MONTH'S SUPPLY ACCORDING UNDP RES REP).

C. BANGLADESH, "BEING THE MOST AFFECTED" COUNTRY, WOULD RECEIVE PRIORITY IN THE ALLOTMENT OF SHARES FROM THE PROPOSED INTERNATIONAL PLEDGES TOTALING 7.5 TONS; AND

D. FAO WOULD DO ALL IT COULD TO PROVIDE TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE AND TO MAKE AVAILABLE THE AGRICULTURAL INPUTS NEEDED FOR BANGLADESH TO REACH FOOD SELF-SUFFICIENCY.

4. WORLD FOOD PROGRAM EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR FRANCIS AQUINO WILL VISIT BANGLADESH DECEMBER 10-14, AGAIN AT BDG INVITATION. ACCORDING UNDP RES REP, AQUINO'S VISIT WILL FOCUS ON LOGISTICAL QUESTIONS OF FOOD PROCUREMENT FOR BANGLADESH BY WFP, INCLUDING PROBLEMS RELATED TO PORT CAPACITY, INTERNAL STORAGE AND TRANSPORTATION FACILITIES; AND FOOD FOR WORK PROGRAMS IN BANGLADESH.
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